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Testimony to House Health Policy Committee

By Bonnie Nothoff RDH, Director, Governmental Affairs

Subject: PA 161, 2005 Collaborative Practice

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Good morning Representative Angerer and members of the committee. My name is Bonnie Nothoff; I am a registered dental hygienist and the Director of Governmental Affairs for the Michigan Dental Hygienists' Association. I am here today to give you an update on a wonderful law many of you helped pass in 2005 allowing registered dental hygienists to apply their skill and their profession to some of the most needy in our state. By removing some of the barriers (dollar qualifications and lessening supervisory restrictions) we have increased access to care in Michigan by thousands. We have four programs I am very familiar with that have begun and two more just recently that are performing sealant and varnish grants furnished by the state. Let me tell you about the four programs with which I am most familiar. Meadow Brook Medical Care Facility in Antrim County was the first and we have written a handbook about it available next week.. Two are on the west side of the state, Toothtime (Battle Creek) and Smiles on Wheels,(Jackson) and a fourth in downtown Detroit (Traveling Toothstation) has been approved and the 161 RDH is also working for an FQHC in this capacity.

We want to share that these programs are being valued in the communities we visit and the response to this public policy has been overwhelming. In today's economy setting up a program described above takes around \$40-50,000. Civic organizations compete with each other to get one of these programs for "their" community. Some come back next year and tell you they have a population they want served and can you do that? These programs are great examples of collaborative practice with dentists and hygienists and you should be proud of this legislation. There are some ways in which we can improve upon something that is good. They are: 1. Help us find ways to find dentists for the restorative work—one way might be through the retired dentist. (2) Encourage the state to continue on their communication to RDH that they become Medicaid providers so billing does not have to go through the retired dentist. (3) Help us regulate our profession so the RDH can utilize a form of assistance when doing sealants or varnish or other 4 handed procedures. (4) Often a prescription for fluoride is an "understood" communication in an office. Help us make that a legal duty in the PA 161 programs.

We want you to know you have enabled a great opportunity for those who should receive care to receive it; for those professionals who have a heart and mind for this kind of work to do it; and for it to take place either as a government enterprise or a private enterprise and allow more of Michigan's 10,000 registered dental hygienists to work as an added bonus!

Thank you for your time and consideration.